



The National Response System ensures coordinated oil spill planning and response efforts by government and industry. Oil pollution cleanup under the National Response System is the responsibility of the polluter, so the System includes requirements to ensure facility and vessel response plans are in place.

Plans of the National Response System

National Contingency Plan

Regional Contingency Plans

Area Contingency Plans

Vessel Contingency Plans Facility Contingency Plans

National Response System Plans

National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan:

Oil spill response planning in the United States is accomplished through a mandated set of inter-related plans. The National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan, commonly referred to as the National Contingency Plan (NCP), provides the broad, national priorities and framework to ensure efficient, coordinated, and effective action to minimize the effects of oil and chemical spills.

The NCP is published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in consultation with the National Response Team, which consists of 16 federal agencies with interests in various aspects of emergency response to pollution incidents. The NRT is chaired by the EPA and vice-chaired by the U. S. Coast Guard.

Regional Contingency Plans:

Ten Regional Contingency Plans, one of which applies to New England, are modeled after the NCP and add information specific to the region; these plans are written by Regional Response Teams (RRTs) whose membership mirrors that of the federal team, but includes all states and participating Indian tribes in the region.

Area Contingency Plans:

The next tier of plans is Area Contingency Plans (ACPs), which cover sub-regional geographic areas. The ACPs are a focal point of response planning, providing detailed information on response procedures, priorities, and appropriate countermeasures.

ACPs are written by Area Committees assembled from government agencies with pollution responsibilities; non-governmental participants may attend meetings and provide input.

The coastal and inland Area Committees are chaired by the individual (On-Scene Coordinator) from the Coast Guard and the EPA, respectively, who has the lead federal spill response authority for the planning area. Contacts for planning are listed on the opposite side of this sheet.

Industry Response Plans:

The final tier of plans under the National Response System umbrella for oil spill response are the Vessel Response Plans and Facility Response Plans required of facilities or vessels which handle oil as a cargo in sufficient quantity that could cause substantial harm to the environment if spilled.

These plans detail pollution response actions for the specific vessel or facility, and must be submitted to the Coast Guard or the EPA for review or approval, depending on the threat posed to the environment. Related Plans: Several other plans exist that relate to the National Response System.

Joint Contingency Plans are written with neighboring countries and apply in a transboundary spill. In a federal disaster, the National Response System supports the Federal Response Plan, which coordinates the larger federal disaster response. Plan Testing and Improvement: The plans of the National Response System are regularly exercised under the Preparedness for Response Exercise Program.

This testing system, devised by the involved agencies, ensures that plans are current and that responsibilities assigned by the plan are tested and understood. Lessons learned from responses and drills are shared nationally, through both publications and an online database, to continually improve plans based on experience. Additional information is available from the sources and contacts listed on the opposite side of this sheet.

In the event of a spill

- Contact the National Response Center at 800-424-8802

Suggested References about Oil Spill Response Plans

- National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan, 40 CFR Part 300, **www.epa.gov/oilspill/lawsregs.htm**
- Coastal Area Contingency Plans, available online and/or through NTIS, **www.uscg.mil/vrp/acpmenu.htm**
- National Response Team Website, **www.nrt.org**
- Preparedness for Response Exercise Program within the First Coast Guard District, **www.uscg.mil/d1/staff/m/prep/**